

## The City of Seattle also works to prevent discrimination in:

### Public Accommodations

- hotels
- government and community services
- private schools
- restaurants
- theaters and recreational facilities
- hospitals and clinics

### Housing

sales/rentals  
disability accommodations or modifications  
harassment, interference,  
criminal intimidation

### Contracting

all aspects of contractual relationships, including bidding to qualify, contracts must value more than \$5,000

### The law also covers harassment and retaliation.

For more information, call the Seattle Office for Civil Rights  
(206) 684-4500  
(206)684-4503 TTY  
[www.seattle.gov/civilrights](http://www.seattle.gov/civilrights)

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# It's Good for Business

## Employer's guide to prevent workplace discrimination

**Seattle Office for Civil Rights**  
Your partner in building equality



City of Seattle



## Fair employment laws safeguard equal rights in the workplace.

### What does the Seattle Office for Civil Rights do?

The Seattle Office for Civil Rights enforces fair employment laws within the Seattle city limits. People who feel that they have been illegally discriminated against can contact our office to explore their legal options.

When someone files a charge of illegal discrimination with our office, we conduct a full investigation and issue findings about whether discrimination has occurred. We also work with all parties in a dispute to settle the case through negotiation.

### What does the law say?

It is illegal to discriminate against someone in employment based on a protected class.

Fair employment laws protect all aspects of the relationship between employers and employees:

- Hiring / firing / layoffs
- Advertising
- Wages
- Promotions / assignments
- Harassment
- Training
- Discipline

The City of Seattle protects these classes:

- Age (40+)
- Sex
- Race
- Color
- Creed
- Religion
- Ancestry
- Marital status
- National origin
- Disability (and (and use of a service animal) animal)
- Sexual orientation
- Gender identity
- Political ideology
- Military status or veteran



For technical assistance, contact the Seattle Office for Civil Rights at (206) 684-4500 or visit us at [www.seattle.gov/civilrights](http://www.seattle.gov/civilrights)



## Treat your employees fairly. Reduce employee turnover and improve staff morale.

### What does the law cover?

- 1 Hiring/firing/layoffs—  
*“Can I insist that all my employees follow a company dress code?”*
- 2 Wages/job duties—  
*“Can I require my employees to speak English on the job?”*
- 3 Hostile work environment—  
*“One of my employees claims she’s being bothered by her supervisor. Am I responsible?”*
- 4 Retaliation—  
*“Can I get rid of an employee who complains a lot?”*

(Answers on the far right flap)

### Avoid the five most common workplace mistakes

- Favoritism in hiring.
- Treating employees unequally, especially in areas such as overtime, promotions and assignments.
- Harassment, including sexual harassment.
- Failure to accommodate someone with a disability.
- Retaliation against an employee who has complained about discrimination.

Retaliation — such as changing employees’ shifts or reducing their hours — is illegal under federal and local laws.

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### Ensure a discrimination-free workplace!

- Develop anti-discrimination policies and procedures for your business.
- Make sure ALL your employees and supervisors know and understand your policies, as well as know whom to contact about a problem.
- Distribute and post your policies where everyone can read them.
- Take all workplace complaints seriously. Any conflict is serious if it undermines morale.
- Document all personnel decisions and actions, and maintain complete personnel records.
- If someone files a charge of illegal discrimination, do NOT retaliate. Retaliation is illegal under federal and local laws.

**Fair employment laws also cover advertisig, training, discipline, and workplace retaliation.**

Answers:

What does the law cover?

- 1 Yes, but employers must accommodate employees’ religious practices.
- 2 Not on that basis alone. A position may require English if it’s an essential part of the job. People should be free to speak other languages on personal time.
- 3 Yes. Employers are responsible for situations that they know (or should have known) about.
- 4 Not if an employee has complained to you about possible discrimination, or if s/he has contacted an enforcement agency.